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EDITORIAL NOTES

WARNING!

New Law; Heavy Penalties!

The Harrison Bill regulating the sale of habit-forming drugs was passed by the last Congress and becomes a law of the United States on March 1st, 1915. This is a Federal law and affects every person in the United States who has occasion to buy, sell, dispense, give away, use or have in his possession any of the habit-forming derivatives of opium or cocoa. Every physician in practice makes use of such drugs more or less often; after March 1st he cannot do so lawfully unless he has taken out the Government license to be had by application to the Collector of Internal Revenue of the district in which he lives. The penalties for violation of this law are heavy fine or imprisonment or both. And the law applies to you; to every physician in the United States; do not forget that! Do not think there is any way of avoiding it or that it does not apply to you personally. You must comply with it or get into trouble. The license fee is small—only \$1.00 per year—but it must be taken out each year and the fact that you hold a license must be of record in the Collector's office.

Why were we not advised of this before? The good Lord, in His inscrutable wisdom, only knows the vagaries and stupidities of some of our high-priced Federal department chiefs. Doubtless some fat-head chief in some office having the administration of this law in charge, assumed that all physicians, pharmacists, dentists, etc., were

natural-born mindreaders. When the mails are to be weighed for fixing railroad mail contracts, tons of seeds, agricultural reports, etc., are sent free of postage. When something important like this comes along, our poor, starving Government cannot afford to send a circular letter of information to the professional gentlemen most interested.

A large number of preparations commonly prescribed contain some one or more of these derivatives and they cannot be dispensed except in the way provided in this law. The list made up by one manufacturing house fills some six or eight closely printed pages. Obviously, there will be more or less friction for some months to come, for unless you have your Federal license, the druggist cannot fill your prescription for a cough mixture or similar preparation that may contain a small amount of one of these drugs, without subjecting himself to the possible penalties of the law.

Be on the safe side; take out your license before March 1st.

Apply to Collector of Internal Revenue—district in which you live.

DUES! DUES! DUES!

Be sure to pay your dues to your county medical society *before* March 1st. It is a very important matter and no longer a mere trivial detail. To administer the business attached to the legal department of the State Society and to safeguard the rights of over 2,500 individual physicians who are members, is no small thing and it must be done on a business basis. For this reason the House of Delegates, and the Council under them and carrying out the instructions of the House, have made certain definite rules for the conduct of the work and the conduct of the members. One of these rules is that all dues must be paid before March 1st or the medical defense provided by the State Society is lost from the 1st of January to such time as the amount is paid. All memberships terminate automatically on December 31st, but all who were members at that time are carried as such up to noon of March 1st, at which time they are automatically stricken from the roster as from the 1st of January. The \$6.00 assessment is a very small matter in comparison with the hundreds, and in some cases thousands of dollars which it costs to defend a suit for alleged malpractice. And you never can tell whether or when you will be sued. In nearly every case of such suit, the doctor writes or says: "I had no idea of this! I never was sued before!" There always has to be a first time for anything and you never can tell whether the lightning will strike you next, or someone else. If your dues are paid to your county secretary before March 1st, and you have a receipt or a cancelled check to show for it, you need not worry about the rest; you will be protected. But remember, in all fracture cases, take an X-ray *plate* of the broken bone or bones and keep the plate; do not give it to the patient to keep as a souvenir! Be sure your dues are paid!